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## Archilochus fr. 130 West

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ARCHILOCHUS FR. 130 WEST

τοῖς θεοῖς †τ' εἰθεΐάπαντὰ πολλάκις μὲν ἐκ κακῶν  
ἄνδρας ὀρθοῦσιν μελαίνῃ κειμένους ἐπὶ χθονί,  
πολλάκις δ' ἀνατρέπουσι καὶ μάλ' εὖ βεβηκότας  
ὕπτιους, κείνοις <δ'> ἔπειτα πολλὰ γίνεται κακά,  
καὶ βίου χρήμῃ πλανᾶται καὶ νόου παρήγορος

Little need be said about the thought of this fragment, for it represents an outlook, extremely common in all periods of Greek literature, that life is full of vicissitude and that the gods or fate are responsible. Stobaeus, the source of our fragment, cites 63 examples in his chapter (4. 41) entitled 'Ὅτι ἀβέβαιος ἢ τῶν ἀνθρώπων εὐπραξία μεταπιπτοῦσης ῥαδίως τῆς τύχης and a multitude can be found in Jutta Krause's book, *Ἄλλοτε ἄλλος. Untersuchungen zum Motiv des Schicksalswechsels in der griechischen Dichtung bis Euripides* (München 1976)<sup>1</sup>. Fr. 130 is also frequently included in the many anthologies on Greek lyric, but in spite of all this it may still be possible to contribute something, however modest, concerning three passages in the fragment.

1. The first passage is in v. 2 and involves the epithet (*μέλαινα*) given to earth. In an often-cited article Harvey surmises that "there must at some stage have been some deep religious association behind the word, which was doubtless forgotten even by the time of Homer, but which continued to make the adjective a regular concomitant of the word γῆ"<sup>2</sup>. Harvey raises the possibility that "the colour of rich soil is intended by μέλας"

<sup>1</sup> Some later examples can be found in P. W. van der Horst, *The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides*, Leiden 1978, p. 197.

<sup>2</sup> E. A. Harvey, *Homeric Epithets in Greek Lyric Poetry*, CQ 1957, n.s. 7, pp. 206–223. The quotation comes from pp. 216–217.

and goes on to say that this "seems to suit" our passage and Theogonis 878. But an allusion to "rich soil" is surely inappropriate in the context of Archilochus' poem. Either the adjective is simply conventional, as is virtually certain in at least some of its occurrences, or it is intended to add an emotive element to the passage. The latter seems more probable to me. It is clear from the context that *κειμένους* does not mean simply "lying", but "lying prostrate" or "down and out", and one is reminded of passages such as *Iliad* 18. 461 *ὁ δὲ κεῖται ἐπὶ χθονὶ θυμὸν ἀχεύων* and 20. 483 *ὁ δ' ἐπὶ χθονὶ κεῖτο τανυσθεῖς* (of a corpse). The adjective may well contribute to this picture of despair because of the negative overtones often associated with it. In addition to the many examples of *μέλας* as a description of death, it can also modify such nouns as *ὀδύνη* (*Il.* 4. 117), *ἄτη* (Aesch. *Agam.* 770), and *ἀρά* (Aesch. *Septem* 832)<sup>3</sup>.

2. The main textual problem, apart from the opening words, is in v. 4. Stobaeus' *κινούσ'* was emended to *κλίνουσ'* (with heavy punctuation following it) by Valckenaer and this reading was adopted by many. At first glance it is an attractive emendation. The alteration is slight and the combination *ὕπτιους κλίνουσ'* can be supported by such passages as *ἀνακλινθεῖς πέσεν ὕπτιος* (*Od.* 9. 371), *κατεκλίθη ὕπτιος* (Pl. *Phaedo* 117e), and *ἀνατρέπει αὐτοὺς καὶ κλίνει ὕπτιους* (Aelian *NA* 6. 24). This reading, however, presents two stylistic problems. The less serious one is the asyndeton which results and which is difficult to defend. More serious is the fact that we are required to give *καὶ* the meaning "and", whereas normal Greek style would lead one to expect "even". Although the combination *καὶ μάλ' ἐδ'* does not seem to be attested elsewhere, *καὶ μάλα* is common and when followed by a participle regularly gives concessive force to it, as in *Iliad* 13. 152 or Theognis 1294. I have not been able to find a single parallel for the sequence-verb, *καὶ* ("and"), participle, verb-which results from Valckenaer's emendation. Consequently, West seems justified in accepting Blaydes' *κείνους* and in eliminating the asyndeton by inserting *δ'*. A minor, additional advantage in this text is that *ὕπτιους* acquires greater force by being isolated in enjambement<sup>4</sup>.

3. West remarks that in the last verse "the change from plural to singular is harsh, though perhaps possible", and he adds that "more strange

<sup>3</sup> For more examples in drama see E. Irwin, *Colour Terms in Greek Poetry*, Toronto 1974, pp. 177-179. See also E. Handschur, *Die Farb- und Glanzwörter bei Homer und Hesiod, in den Homerischen Hymnen und den Fragmenten des epischen Kyklos*, Wien 1970, pp. 223-224.

<sup>4</sup> There is a lengthy defense of Stobaeus' *κινούσ'* by A. A. Nikitas, *Ἀρχιλόχου ἀπ. 58 D.* (= 130 W.), "Archaiognosia" 1980, 1, pp. 237-260, but he does not take adequate account of the problem presented by *καὶ*.

is the conjunction of penury and mental derangement”<sup>5</sup>. Both are valid comments, but it should be pointed out that parallels can be found. There is a similar change from plural to singular in Theognis 381–382.

οὐδέ τι κεκριμένον πρὸς δαίμονός ἐστι βροτοῖσιν  
οὐδ’ ὁδὸς ἦντιν’ ἰὼν ἀθανάτοισιν ἄδοι;

For the combination of penury and a distraught state of mind one can compare Rhianus fr. 1 Powell, a fragment whose general tenor is the same as that of Archilochus’ lines. Vv. 3–4 describe one who βιότοιον [...] ἐπιδευῆς | στρωφᾶται (= βίου χρήμη πλανᾶται) and in v. 6 such a person is οὐδέ τι θαρσαλέος νοέειν ἔπος οὐδέ τι ῥέξαι. As Hopkinson states *ad loc.*, “νοέειν suggests that he cannot even from his thoughts coherently, let alone give them expression”<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> M. L. West, *Studies in Greek Elegy and Iambus*, Berlin 1974, p. 132. I think “derangement” is slightly too strong a term. The expression νόου παρήγορος probably means simply “distraught”.

<sup>6</sup> N. Hopkinson, *A Hellenistic Anthology*, Cambridge 1988, p. 227.